

BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

WORK DURING THE INITIAL QUARTER

Less than one year ago, hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated Louisiana and the Gulf Coast, causing the largest disaster in American history. During this time of great need, Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco established the Louisiana Recovery Authority to serve as the planning and coordinating body for Louisiana's recovery and rebirth.

Securing Funding & Other Resources

The LRA worked during the first quarter to realize Governor Blanco's charge of "speaking with one voice for Louisiana." The LRA crafted a list of federal priorities that were endorsed by the full board at its initial meeting. These priorities established a singular focus for Louisiana's recovery efforts. This direction allowed the LRA to be successful in working with Louisiana's Congressional delegation and others to successfully lobby for the passage of the \$29 billion Gulf Coast Aid Package, which included \$6.2 billion in CDBG funds for Louisiana, and the \$8.7 billion Gulf Opportunity Zone Act of 2005, which aims to boost private investments and development along the Gulf Coast.

In an effort to secure funds from private investors for Louisiana's recovery, the LRA also endorsed the creation of the LRA Support Organization. This is a private, nonprofit organization that raises funds to provide external resources and support for the Louisiana Recovery Authority's efforts to implement its vision and mandate. Through its support organization, the LRA has been able to access the best consultants in the country in the areas of planning, health care and public affairs.

Establishing Principles & Policies for Redevelopment

During the first quarter of activity, the LRA adopted the philosophy of rebuilding Louisiana safer, stronger and smarter. This philosophy continues to guide the principles and policies for redevelopment.

In partnership with the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and the American Planning Association (APA), the LRA also hosted the Louisiana Recovery and Rebuilding Conference. Hundreds of citizens, community leaders, architects and planners worked together to develop five specific principles for rebuilding which underscored Louisiana's commitment to a recovery and rebuilding process that is fair and equitable to everyone. These principles were also adopted by the LRA.

Also in keeping with the safer, stronger, smarter philosophy, LRA task forces began examining recovery-related

HURRICANE IMPACT

Hurricane Katrina: August 29, 2005

Hurricane Rita: September 24, 2005

IMPACT

More than 1,500 lives lost

More than 780,000 residents displaced

More than 200,000 housing units damaged or destroyed

More than 850 schools damaged or destroyed

More than 18,700 businesses damaged or destroyed

More than 220,000 jobs lost

More than 100 square miles coastline lost

policies in issue areas such as economic and workforce development, education, environment, levees and coastal protection, housing, health care, human services, long-term planning, and infrastructure.

Leading Long-term Community & Regional Planning

In an effort to support long-term community and regional planning for South Louisiana, the LRA initiated Louisiana Speaks: Our voice. Our Plan. Our Future. This process addresses planning at every level of recovery: buildings, neighborhoods, parishes and the whole South Louisiana region.

During the first quarter of this year, Governor Blanco and the LRA selected a team of world-renowned planners to lead the Louisiana Speaks planning effort. This team of planning experts from Louisiana and around the world includes Calthorpe Associates, Duany, Plater-Zyberk, & Co. and Urban Design Associates.

The LRA also began working with FEMA's long-term community recovery division, ESF-14, to support planning at the parish level and collect input from citizens and stakeholders on Louisiana Recovery Planning Day.

Ensuring Transparency and Accountability

As Louisiana moves to recover and rebuild, there will be millions of dollars of contracts for cleanup, demolition, and construction awarded in Louisiana. This is why ensuring transparency and accountability is critical to a successful recovery. During its first quarter, the LRA established an Audit Committee to ensure best practices and procedures in the management of any funds received, expended, or disbursed by the LRA. The membership of the Audit Committee includes

members from the LRA Board of Directors and representatives from the Public Affairs Research Council and the Council for a Better Louisiana.

In an effort to eliminate fraud and abuse, the LRA has also urged that the state implement a strategy for the use of Independent Private Sector Inspectors General for certain construction contracts with the state.

Additionally, Deloitte & Touche, LLP, one of the big four accounting firms, was selected by the State of Louisiana, Division of Administration, to provide accounting and forensic services in Louisiana's receipt and disbursement of FEMA recovery funds. The firm of UHY, LLP, a nationally licensed accounting firm, was selected to perform an independent examination level assessment of the State's internal controls, processes and procedures over the receipt and disbursement of FEMA Disaster Recovery funds, as well as additional assistance in the area of fraud detection, investigation, and mitigation. Contracts setting out the specific services to be provided by each are being developed.

Ensuring transparency and openly communicating with the citizens of Louisiana about the status of the recovery is central to LRA operations. The LRA has worked to ensure complete transparency by fully complying with the Open Meetings Law for all board and task force meetings and by posting all relevant information on its Web site. Citizens can also sign up for the LRA listserv to get e-mail updates on recovery activities by visiting www.lra.louisiana.gov.

REACHING OUT

In an effort to engage key stakeholder groups and ensure equity in the recovery, a team led by the LRA, the Louisiana Family Recovery Corps, Greater New Orleans Knowledge Works and PolicyLink are working to improve online and offline communications with residents at home and those who are displaced.



Now Available on the Web

www.louisianarebuilds.info is a state-of-the-art Web portal which serves as a single point of contact for recovery information.

Coming Soon

We are teaming up again to establish a toll-free number for residents that do not have access to the Web. Stay tuned: This free service will be available soon.

SAFER, STRONGER, SMARTER

When developing the guiding principles that would drive Louisiana's recovery, the LRA reached out to many citizens, experts and community leaders in Louisiana and throughout the country. While these stakeholders expressed many different ideas and views throughout this process, three common themes emerged as the most critical pieces of Louisiana's long-term recovery strategy: we must rebuild safer, stronger and smarter. This philosophy continues to guide the work of the LRA.

Rebuilding safer. The LRA is committed to developing policies and programs that will help make Louisiana less vulnerable in future disasters. This includes strengthening our levees and hurricane protection system, restoring our coastline, developing hazard mitigation plans that reduce risk and ensuring that buildings and homes are built or re-built to the highest standards. Louisiana must

be safe. Our citizens deserve it, our communities require it, and our commitment to put our rebuilding dollars to the best use possible demands it.

Rebuilding stronger. The LRA is committed to creating jobs and greater opportunities for Louisiana. This includes investing dollars in the economy in ways that will lead to economic growth, job creation, wealth creation and an improved quality of life for all people. This also means leveraging private and public dollars to generate a positive return on investments, encouraging programs that raise the level of home ownership throughout the state and supporting the development of mixed income communities, with easily-accessed public services aimed at breaking the cycle of poverty.

Rebuilding smarter. The LRA is committed to creating a system of

neighborhoods and communities that better supports our citizens and allows them to thrive. This means delivering services to citizens more efficiently and effectively and developing smarter communities. It's about creating a state-of-the-art public infrastructure system of roads, bridges, hospitals and schools that provide the best services at the lowest costs.

In order to build a smarter Louisiana, the LRA is committed to requiring that rebuilt community assets reflect the best thinking in community design and service delivery models; a reorganized system of levee boards that remove politics and include people of all parishes in the region; and ensuring that infrastructure is built to support future, not past, community needs – based on latest demographic trends and projections.